7:Speck E-5 (1928-1932) 1937 NM7 Delaware NM7
Lenape

of ceremony; (*f*) relaxation for ensuing period of night in social dances and amusements. 796^x

Wampum Compensation.—Gift of yard-length of wampum, "shoulder to finger-tip," to officers and assistants as spiritual compensation and symbol of blessing for their holy services. Wampum remains only in circulation for payment of offices in religious ceremonies for their maintenance, not as an economic medium of exchange.

Ceremonial Equipment.—Drums (dried deer hide folded and water-drum), rattles (tortoise shell containing pebbles), feathers for sweeping away spiritual obstacles, dried juniper incense, ceremonial smoking tobacco, grease for drinking, sacred cornmeal and wild meat (or accepted substitute to suit modern conditions), original Delaware dress and ornamentation of participants, red paint (*pe'kɔn*), and symbolical fires. *The Delaware pattern is inclined to the use of carved images of the human face and form, either as masks, effigy figures or face sculpturings.*

Symbol of Twelve.—In division of ceremony into periods, in repetition of movements, in ceremonial equipment, the number twelve is a base concept of procedure, deriving itself evidently from the lunar cycle. [801]

Religious Attitude.—Deep feeling of humility and unworthiness, constantly reiterated appeal to Great Spirit through the spirit-forces (mani'tu) controlling departments of the universe, for general blessings of health, protection and sustenance, with sincere expressions of gratitude for the blessings of nature hitherto enjoyed, reverence for ancestral institutions, foods and inventions and appeal to spirits of deceased to be present upon ceremonial occasions to enjoy them and grant immunity from spiritual infections of sickness and evil.

Social Aspects.—The solidification of Delaware nationality through coöperation and participation in the social events, dances and amusements, as well as in the religious unity fostered through the carrying out of rites and institutions originating among sanctified generations of the past. The unity of the ceremonial groupings (Wolf, Tortoise and Turkey) composing the Delaware tribe is strengthened by 796^x 182

7: Speck E-5 (1928-1932) 1937 NM7 Delaware NM7
Lenape

796 the common duties and ceremonial cohesion of their members.
182 The tendency to make Delaware ceremonies esoteric is also present.

796 The personages of the ceremony may be listed under the following titles, which apply to all the rites performed. The ceremony itself is *tel·ha'k·en*, "that which is brought in," the idea being that someone sponsors and produces it by bringing forth the occasion. The leader or master of ceremonies is *elha'k·et*, "one who brings it in"; *pəm'tu'nhet*, "the speaker" of the occasion; *a'ckaˀs*, "attendant," the waiter or helper; *exhaŋge'tcik*, "those who give away food," the cooks and feast attendants; *naxko'hak·e'tcik*, "followers" being the drummers whose rôle it is to follow the singers, repeating their verses; *pu'tcɔl*, equivalent to officer who has charge of keeping order.

538 A word or two concerning the distinctions in character between narrations which pass among the Delawares as epics having a mythical explanatory origin and those which are mere chronicles of happenings in past or present experiences of life. The traditional legend explanatory of some of the phenomena of nature is termed *ati·loha'k·an*, the ordinary narrative story *la'tci·molsuwa'k·an*. The distinction between these categories is something like what differentiates a saga from a narrative. The former is a legend concerning characters and events which do not change in the telling, partaking of the nature of gospels. A biography, on the other hand, falls under the latter term. Similar distinctions, it is interesting to note, have been recorded in respect to the traditional lore of other Algonkian-speaking peoples so well defined in the case of the Menomini by Dr. Bloomfield.[1] The texts in the ensuing collection are of the saga type and as such form an individual version of certain important teachings concerning the spiritual and physical universe which have formed without change the body of sacred learning acquired from some remote sources and handed down among the religious leaders of the tribe for ages.

171 The foregoing summary is arranged and offered as a

[1] L. Bloomfield, "Menomini Texts," *Publications Amer. Ethnological Society*, XII, 1928, p. xii.

7:Speck E-5 (1928-1932) 1937 NM7 Delaware NM7
Lenape

above all non-human life forms, and in particular the endowment of their own system of worship for which they are directly responsible to the Creator himself. Herein is born their tradition of religion, the very center of their culture, denoted by an abstraction, *lənapeɔ'k·an*, literally "human (Delaware) soul, or culture," a term occasionally encountered in the reflections of the speakers quoted in the texts. Upon such criteria of judgment the Lona'pe rate themselves as creatures far above the emergence level. And we have before us part of the evidence in the religious forms recorded in the preceding pages. To be sure the mass content of rites and ceremonies has been declining before the inroads of European influence. A mere pitiful residue is at hand, as the orator has frequently reiterated in his sermons. The native nations of Indians on the Atlantic seaboard were by no means crude or a primitive people.

That this essay is a sequel and complement to my Big House Ceremony volume (1931) need scarcely be repeated. Where that treats the composite rites whose aims are to invoke, address and thank the Creator, this deals with procedures directed toward influencing the lesser spiritual forces, to afford them satisfaction and to secure immunity from their imaginary persecutions. All is framed in accordance with a native concept of the workings of natural law as put in motion by the will of the Father, the Creator. The rites described are dominated by a constant idea in the minds of the people, to wit: that of being in the midst of a universe of partly-known spiritual beings potentially pernicious. Some among them are approachable by the proper forms of address on the part of man for the removal of harmful influences. When the corrective measures to alleviate the evils of spirit agencies are known they constitute the rites of relief, and here we have them collected; their philosophy of the uncertainties. A far-reaching distinction is observable between the Delaware attitude toward the Creator, who is consistently benign, and the spirits of lower rank addressed in the rites now treated whose attributes are not. These observations bring out the contrast between the ceremonies dealt with here and those

7: Speck E-5 (1928-1932) 1937 NM7 Delaware NM7
Lenape

182 771 covered in the Big House Ceremony. The infallible Father and Creator seated in the twelfth heaven above, in his beneficence toward man is believed to yearn for the voiced recognition of his creatures as they pay their devoirs to him—his human children gathered to celebrate the twelve day ceremony of the Big House. Even his creatures the trees recognize his all-high benevolence when murmuring their prayers to him in the rustling of leaves, and the birds whose voices are also prayer-calls. We learn again how only the created beings can depart from the rule of goodness and perfection; the lesser spirits, those on earth, mankind, animals, and plants. In man's struggle to avert the evil purposes of his spiritual opponents there have developed the means of checking their evil tendencies and consequent misfortunes. Thus are accounted for the rites and ceremonies. When the source of specific persecution has been discovered, the Delaware discovers the spiritual means for relief through revelation. Thus he has laid his mind open to the accumulation of visions and visitations and to their acceptance as verities. Most typical are the cases where captured and partly tamed animals, friends and pets at first, are imagined to possess lurking potencies of evil. They, like man, combine the opposed natures of good and evil. Caprice, it seems, decides their reactions toward each other. Yet throughout is the realization of the ruling principle of good in the abstract represented by the Creator, invoked through the medium of spirits nearest to him to intercede for the people's good. So we interpret the functions of the ceremonial rites and addresses which form so valuable a part of the material provided here by our informants. The systems revealed are not stupid and "superstitious" but poetical in their undertones of reasoning: poetical mechanisms of escape.

000 Thus having gone through the data gathered for preservation through some years of study at the feet of native informants, we build up the structure of knowledge providing source material for future students in the field of the humanities. In doing so we anticipate that unhappy time now hastened by the forces of commerce and "mass civilization" when

10: Speck E-4, 5 (ca. 1925) 1931
NM7 Delaware NM7

648 Neither time nor closer association with Europeans has caused this feeling to disappear among the Delawares.[1] We observe the persistence of the same spirit in the sentiments conveyed in the text, the reverence for the *mores* of the past, the attitude of adoration toward their ancestors who, although ignorant pagans, possessed a mystic wisdom and intelligence which, they are willing to concede, surpassed the endowments and knowledge of the present generation.[2]

Yet notwithstanding the attitude of the Delawares toward the whites, we must not be misled, by consideration of the antipathy and distrust expressed since colonial times, into regarding the same spirit to have characterized their religious motives. For several authorities besides the narrator of the text coincide in telling us that the ceremonies of placation performed by the tribe are maintained for the benefit of all mankind. The white man is to be blamed for the existence in the mind of the Delaware of the feeling in favor of segregation. Yet the Delaware is willing to extend over his enemies the blessings resulting from his devotions.

771 The informant's own attitude is interesting as expressed in his own words.

"The Big House is regarded by the Delawares as the supreme religion among all forms of worship on the Continent. The center post [778 532] with the carved faces of the two sides is the foundation, whose topmost

[1] J. Morse (Rep. to the Secretary of War on the Indian Tribes, New Haven, 1822, p. 110) alludes to the Delawares of 1818 as "having a peculiar aversion to white people." Heckewelder still earlier had much to say about the causes of dissension, op. cit., p. 191.

[2] Note the spirit manifested in a communication from the Delaware Council to the Historical Commission (June 1929) "We are proud to have such a wonderful opportunity, so that our children will take pride in the work of their fathers to preserve our sacred Delaware tradition." While the hold of the old doctrine may be losing its grasp upon the younger generation of Delawares, we have some evidence of a reactionary trend in sentiment towards its rationalization. Not so long ago one of the Christian Delawares, [182] moved by a zealous, evangelistic impulse, arose and advised the conservatives to abandon once and for all the Big House ceremony on the ground that it was part of an age of superstition and ignorance. The opposition accorded this appeal was surprising and unexpected. The individuals behind the move for abandonment were, as it happened, uneducated themselves. Some of the defenders of the old faith, women who possessed good education in government schools, responded by accusing the intruders of incompetency to pass judgment on the merits of the contending creeds, by reason of their own ignorance; in not being able to read the testaments of one nor grasp the meaning of the other. Religious conservatism is a marked characteristic of the nationalistic element in the Nation. It is even asserted that they regard their migration from the east to have been in part prompted by a desire to preserve their religion. Dr. Michelson, who visited the tribe in 1912, was impressed by their tenacity of creed, (Smithsonian Misc. Collec., vol. 60, No. 30, p. 35) upon which Harrington also makes comments (I, op. cit., p. 200).

In an unpublished note to the original manuscript of Rafinesque's Walamolum (1833) now in the Brinton Library of the University of Pennsylvania Museum, the author gives a handwritten fragment of Delaware history from 1600. It is a bitter native lament voiced over the decline of the tribe, pronounced by a chief and translated by a John Burns, with mention of the removal from the east to west of the Mississippi and finally to the Osage country.

11:Newcomb E-5 (1952) 1956 NM7 Delaware NM7

meeting than they were two decades ago. In this respect peyotists seem to be merely following the general trend of White society.

Big Moon peyotism diffused to the Delawares as a substitute for an outmoded religious system, but its replacement of the traditional religion has been slow and incomplete. The peyote cult is still regarded by many Delawares as a somewhat inferior replacement for the traditional ceremonies. What is more, during World War II the Big House Ceremony, the major, annual religious rite of the Delawares, was revived and held three times, albeit in abbreviated form. The Delawares would continue the old rites today, but because of expense, cultural decay, and other factors, they have been finally abandoned. It is doubtful whether the traditional rites, even if abbreviated and vestigial, can ever again be held. Petrullo (1934: 175) underestimated their strength when he said more than two decades ago that they were "No longer able to perform the ancient ceremonies. . . ." Neither Petrullo nor I found out what proportion of the Delawares were peyotists, Christians, or adherents to the old religion, so that changes in religious affiliation are largely a matter of conjecture. It is known, however, that many of the proponents of the abandoned religion have become peyotists, but at least a few have become Christians. In short, the peyote cult has never completely replaced the traditional religion, nor has it gained universal approval. The most that can be said by way of comparison is that the Big Moon cult was a covert, lively, and popular one in the thirties; it remains so today.

Probably the greatest changes which have occurred in Delaware Big Moon peyotism within the past twenty-five years have been in the reasons why people are drawn to it. There is not space here to discuss this topic in detail, but it should be pointed out that the peyote cult originally diffused to the Delawares, and was still attractive to them in the early thirties because:

> . . it teaches acceptance of the new world, and makes possible an attitude of resignation in the face of the probable disappearance of the Indian groups as distinct peoples, culturally and racially, by insisting on the necessity of emancipation from mundane aspirations. . . . [The peyote cult] is the natural but final recourse of a subjugated people who fully realize the inadequacy of their material means to restore their former world-state (Petrullo, 1934: 1).

The appeal of modern peyotism is, at least in part, of a different nature. Briefly, the Delawares are no longer a cohesive cultural or social entity; they are geographically scattered and socially atomized. There is no tribal activity which draws them together as Delawares, and every year there are fewer distinctive customs which set them apart from

11:Newcomb E-5 (1952)1956 NM7 Delaware NM7

other people. Yet the individual Delaware is not an ordinary American; he is thought of by the public as an Indian, and he thinks of himself as an Indian. One way in which he can express this Indianness and feel that he is a part of a larger group is to be a peyotist. The peyote cult gives him an opportunity to participate in ceremonies with others who occupy a similar position in American life, and it provides him with an opportunity to express his Indian cultural heritage, however slight it may be. In the meeting just described there were Winnebagos, Sioux, and Shawnees, in addition to the Delawares. This is normal for a Delaware peyote meeting; in fact, their meetings always include members of other tribes. They also frequently attend meetings with the Osage, Quapaw, and others. In short, in earlier times the Delaware Big Moon peyote cult was a religious expression of assimilation and an attempt to preserve something from the shattered cultural past. Today it functions more as a religious symbol of the Indian minority and a rallying point for what has been termed a Pan-Indian society (Newcomb, 1955).

SUMMARY

The arrangement of the tepee and the conduct of Delaware Big Moon peyote meetings has remained essentially constant since 1930. Over this span of time the Big Moon cult has not succeeded in completely replacing the traditional religion, nor has it apparently become any more popular. Probably the greatest changes have occurred in the reasons for the cult's appeal to the Delawares. The modern attractions of the peyote cult are particularly strong in its aspects as an *Indian* ceremony and as a rallying point for Pan-Indianism, rather than in the solace it offers to "a subjugated people."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

LaBarre, Weston, 1938—The peyote cult. *Yale University Publications in Anthropology*, No. 19. New Haven.

———, McAllester, D. P., Slotkin, J. S., Stewart, O. C., Tax, Sol, 1951—Statement on peyote. *Science*, 114 (2970): 582–583.

Newcomb, Jr., William W., 1955—A note on Cherokee-Delaware Pan-Indianism, *American Anthropologist*, 57: 1041–1045.

Petrullo, Vincenzo, 1934—*The diabolic root*. University of Pennsylvania Press. The University Museum. Philadelphia.